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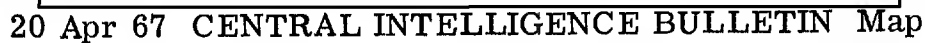
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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

Military Developments in North Vietnam: The largest air battle of the war occurred yesterday after a major US air strike on the Xuan Mai army barracks 25 miles southwest of Hanoi.

At least 17 separate air engagements involving a total of 28 MIGs and 20 or more US aircraft were reported. One MIG has been confirmed downed and two others were possibly downed. Six MIGs were reported damaged by US aircraft. One US Air Force F-105 was downed by ground fire, and an A-1E providing cover for the downed crew was subsequently shot down by one of the MIGs.

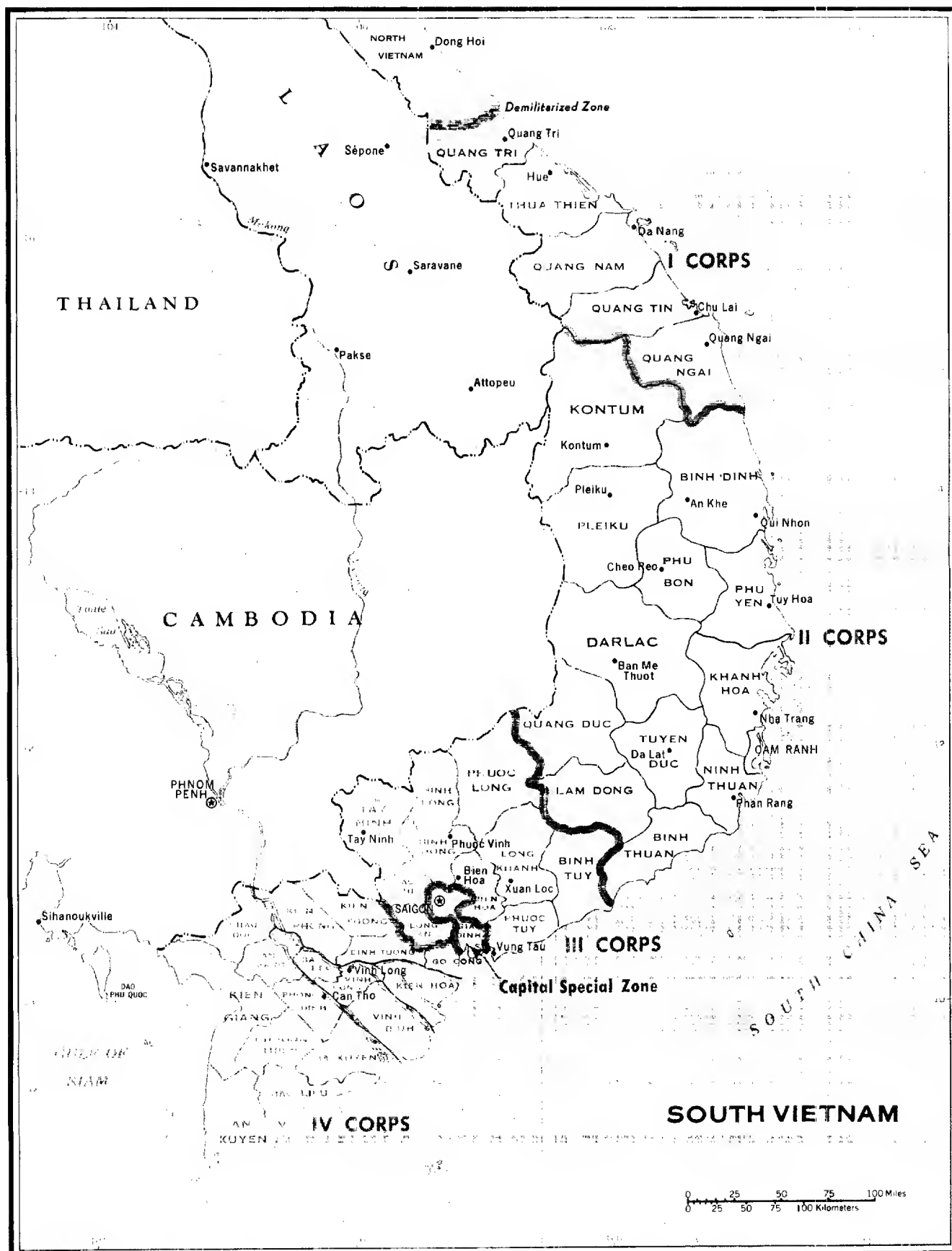
Initial reports indicate the strike on the barracks--believed to be a special training center for infiltration groups--was successful. (Map)



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The Military Situation in South Vietnam: The Communists continue to apply pressure against US and South Vietnamese forces in South Vietnam's northern I Corps.

In an apparent show of concern over allied efforts to create a barrier south of the DMZ in northeastern Quang Tri Province, enemy troops have laid mines in the work area, directed mortar fire at defensive positions of allied forces engaged in the project, and attempted to draw the allies into firefights. Although none of the incidents has developed into an engagement of significant size, constant harassment of the allied forces is hindering the development of the buffer strip.

Throughout the rest of the country, the lull in major ground confrontations between allied and Communist forces continues with only scattered small-unit actions reported.

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Disarmament: There appears to be little chance that the six EURATOM states will accept the revised safeguards provisions in the draft nonproliferation treaty (NPT).

They object to the so-called "guillotine" clause of the treaty, which sets a time limit of three years for agreement between EURATOM and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on mutually satisfactory safeguards, after which IAEA safeguards would automatically apply if the question had not been resolved.

The EURATOM Commission has proposed that the three-year time limit be eliminated. It suggests that in the event that EURATOM and the IAEA fail to reach agreement, the application of IAEA safeguards be discussed during the review conference provided for in the treaty five years after the NPT enters into force.

Meanwhile, efforts are under way at the North Atlantic Council (NAC) to find a way around French insistence that the NAC take no action implying endorsement of further negotiations between the US and USSR on the NPT. Ambassador Cleveland believes that a "summing up" of the NPT consultations in the NAC by Secretary General Brosio might be acceptable to the French in lieu of formal endorsement. French permanent representative De Leusse has said his government is prepared to consider such a "summing up" provided it includes an "objective" statement of the French position.

At a cabinet meeting yesterday the German Government, which has been among the leading NATO critics of the current NPT draft, decided not to object to further US-USSR negotiations on the treaty. The cabinet did not, however, endorse such negotiations and continues to share the views of EURATOM on the safeguards problem.

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Nigeria: Eastern Nigeria has taken another step toward full independence.

Eastern Governor Ojukwu on 18 April issued an edict taking over the management and assets in the East of all federally chartered corporations. This step removes the last vestiges of federal control over electric power, transport, coal, and produce marketing enterprises, as well as over broadcasting and posts and telecommunications.

The federal government's response to Ojukwu's edict will probably be determined at a meeting of the Supreme Military Council (SMC)--without Ojukwu--scheduled for today. Ojukwu's most recent action, following closely on the recent Ghanaian coup attempt, may further reduce the chances for a full SMC meeting, which had been scheduled for next week in Ghana.

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Cuba: The current publicity build-up regarding Ernesto "Che" Guevara is probably a propaganda ploy to dramatize Fidel Castro's recently stepped-up call for armed revolution in Latin America. Guevara, a former high-ranking regime official and leading spokesman for armed struggle tactics, vanished in March 1965 amid reports of a clash with Castro. No substantial evidence has been offered to prove whether Guevara is still alive. The publication on 16 April of a 5,000-word letter allegedly authored by Guevara perpetuates the Cuban line that he is secretly leading a guerrilla group in a foreign land.

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